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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAKU 000448

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/03/2019
TAGS: [AJ](#) [IR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [RU](#) [TR](#)
SUBJECT: AZERBAIJAN: PRESIDENT'S FOREIGN POLICY ADVISOR
DISCUSSES REGIONAL ISSUES AND NABUCCO

REF: A. REF A: BAKU 392
[1](#)B. REF B: BAKU 439

Classified By: Ambassador Anne E. Derse, for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Senior Congressional Staff Members Markovsky and Katz met with the Head of the Foreign Relations Division Novruz Mammadov May 27 and 29 to discuss GOAJ relations with its neighbors and the U.S. Mammadov's comments focused on Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) and the seven occupied districts. Although Azerbaijan would like the immediate return of all seven occupied districts, he said, the GOAJ would consider it a good initial step if five of the seven were returned. Mammadov also stated that, although relations have been mended, the GOAJ is ready to sacrifice its relationship with Turkey if Turkey opens its borders with Armenia without a resolution on NK. Mammadov said the Iranian Ambassador to Baku warned him of "very, very grave consequences" if the GOAJ hosts the Israeli president in July. He added that Russia has been applying pressure to Azerbaijan for its ongoing commitment to the Nabucco pipeline. END SUMMARY

MAMMADOV: ARMENIA WILL USE DELAY TACTICS IN ST PETERSBURG

[1](#)2. (C) Head of the President's Foreign Relations Division Novruz Mammadov met twice with Congressional Staff Delegation, Alan Markovsky and Jonathan Katz, to discuss Azerbaijani relations with the U.S., Armenia and Turkey. Mammadov focused on Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) and said he expected that Armenia will use delaying tactics in St. Petersburg, where presidents Aliyev and Sargsyan are scheduled to meet June 4. Mammadov said that although Azerbaijan would prefer Armenia to release all seven occupied territories, the GOAJ would accept an initial first step of immediate withdrawal from five of the seven territories. The return of all seven territories would be impossible and unrealistic for now, Mammadov said. Armenia emerged from the May 7 Aliyev-Sargsyan meeting in Prague without making compromises, yet without criticism for non-constructive behavior, he noted. Combined with a lack of western pressure, Armenia now has no incentive to negotiate and will pursue hardline tactics. Mammadov asserted that these results from Prague underscored that the Minsk Group process is flawed.

[1](#)3. (C) (COMMENT: Mammadov did not repeat the public charges he made recently against Minsk Group Co-Chair Matthew Bryza, but he reasserted the GOAJ's displeasure at the statement the co-chairs released immediately following the meeting between Presidents Aliyev and Sargsyan. Mammadov said the GOAJ was not alerted to the large numbers of media that would be at the post-meeting, nor was President Aliyev told that the co-chairs would release a statement following the meeting. The GOAJ considered the statement to be too deferential to

Armenia and contributed to Armenia's more positive image going forward. END COMMENT)

ARMENIA WANTS TO DIVIDE U.S. FROM TURKEY AND AZERBAIJAN

¶4. (C) Mammadov said GOAJ relations with Turkey have been reinforced since the May 13-14 visit of Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan (REF A). He added, however, that NK is so important to the GOAJ that Azerbaijan would sacrifice all relations with Turkey if Turkey were to open the border to Armenia without an NK resolution. Returning to Armenian foreign policy intentions, Mammadov said he believed Armenia's policy regarding "genocide" is designed to drive a wedge between the U.S. and Turkey, and Armenian policy on NK is to place the U.S. in opposition to the GOAJ.

RUSSIA AND IRAN APPLYING PRESSURE TO GOAJ

¶5. (C) Mammadov said the GOAJ has received a good deal of pressure from Iran regarding the GOAJ's invitation to host the Israeli President in July. He said the Iranian Ambassador had met him the day before and promised "very, very grave consequences" if Azerbaijan followed through with its plans for the visit, as it would be the only Muslim country to receive the Israeli president. (COMMENT: Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov in a separate meeting with Staff Delegation later that day confirmed that the GOAJ intends to move forward as planned and said it will signal that Iran cannot push the GOAJ around. See REF B. END COMMENT)

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¶6. (C) Regarding Russia, Mammadov said Russia promised the GOAJ "serious consequences" for its participation in the Eastern Partnership. Russia also continues to privately voice its concern to GOAJ officials for their support of the Nabucco natural gas project, which cuts out Russia.

NABUCCO NOT YET A LOST OPPORTUNITY

¶7. (C) Turning his attention to Nabucco, Mammadov said there is still time "to save" the project. He said the lack of progress over the last two years on Nabucco is only compounded by today's global economic crisis and that because companies do not have money, western governments should renew their interest and fund the pipeline project. Mammadov also said the GOAJ is prepared to contribute 10-15 bcm the first year of Nabucco's operations and believes Turkmenistan will follow Azerbaijan's lead.

Comment: As Always, Focus on Armenia

¶8. (C) It is not surprising that Mammadov chose to use his time with the Staffdel to focus on Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. At this point in time -- given Turkish-Armenian rapprochement and the presidents meetings in Prague and St. Petersburg, and following the May 13-14 PM Erdogan visit and repeated stops in Baku by Turkey's new Foreign Minister -- the issues are particularly sensitive for the Azerbaijanis. Mammadov continues to complain about the co-chairs' post-Prague press statement, and is repeating the call for the immediate return of the five territories (rather than endorsing the 3 1 approach of the Minsk Group). Azerbaijan clearly is trying to set the stage for St. Petersburg, with a finger pointing toward Yerevan in case the talks there do not succeed. End Comment

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